

**Washington, D.C.** - Today, Rep. David Price re-introduced the Keep Teachers Teaching Act, which would provide federal grants to states or school districts to develop innovative teacher retention programs. The bill would also direct the Department of Education to identify the most promising teacher retention approaches and to disseminate information about those approaches to states and school districts around the country. Rep. Price believes that retaining the highest caliber teachers should be a focus as Congress considers education reforms.

The introduction coincides with this week's celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week, when students and parents across the country express their gratitude by giving small gifts of appreciation to their favorite teachers. However, one of the biggest challenges facing school districts throughout the country today is the retention of qualified public school teachers.

According to the Congressional Research Service, nearly a third of K-12 teachers leave the profession within five years of being hired because of poor working conditions, low pay, low morale, and lack of opportunities for advancement. In some schools, the five-year attrition rate reaches 50 percent. The National Education Association (NEA), the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) support Rep. Price's legislation to address the pressing need to correct this trend.

"We have fallen woefully short in retaining the best-of-the-best teachers," Rep. Price said. "Too many are leaving mid-career, or even after only a few years. This bill will allow each school district to find the right mix of additional resources, career enrichment and financial encouragement to meet the needs of their best educators."

Rep. Price's bill calls for no additional funding. It would provide grants to states or school districts through an existing program, allowing policymakers to create innovative retention plans that could be matched to the needs of individual school districts rather than imposing a top-down, one-size-fits-all plan. Effective programs to address teacher retention are already at work in school districts around the country. The Kenan Fellows Program, which pairs public schoolteachers in North Carolina with scientists and university faculty to develop innovative math, science and technology curricula, is but one example of such a model program that is already working. Many more innovative programs could be advanced if the right kind of resources were available.

"Teacher retention should be a focus of the debate as this Congress moves forward on education reform," Rep. Price said. "This is an area where we can hope for some bipartisan consensus."

Price has been a leader in Congress on legislation to improve the quality of public education throughout the nation by bringing teachers of the highest caliber into the profession and then keeping them in the classroom. He has been working for years to build on North Carolina's success at recruiting qualified teachers through the Teaching Fellows program by proposing legislation to expand access to similar programs throughout the country.

Original co-sponsors of the legislation include Reps. Corrine Brown (D-FL), G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), John Conyers (D-MI), Joe Donnelly (D-IN), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Larry Kissell (D-NC), John Lewis (D-GA), Mike McIntyre (D-NC), Brad Miller (D-NC), Jim Moran (D-VA), Tim Walz (D-MN) and Mel Watt (D-NC).

# # #